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CAGOTS OF THE PYRENEES.

FROM time to time we meet with mention of a peculiar tribe or group of persons called *Cagots*, in the French provinces adjacent to the mountain range of the Pyrenees; and of other groups on the Spanish side of the same range, known by other names, but marked by similar characteristics. These unfortunate persons have for ages been ostracised, shunned, treated as outcasts by their neighbours, placed under legal and social disabilities alike degrading and insulting. Recent investigations have laid bare for the first time the nature and origin of this singular state of society.

All authorities agree that in bygone ages these *Cagots* were uniformly regarded as beings to be despised, avoided, distrusted, kept at a distance. The inhabitants of neighbouring towns and villages treated them as diseased and morally offensive beings to be uniformly shunned. If they dwelt in towns they were confined to a special faubourg, which the other inhabitants seldom or never entered; and when they emerged from these limits, they were obliged to wear a small bit of red cloth attached to some conspicuous part of their apparel, as a sort of signal for shunning. In the country districts they mostly inhabited poor wretched hovels, frequently grouped under the walls of a château or abbey, and separated from the villages by a water-course or a thicket. A small door was set apart for them to enter the churches, behind a barrier which separated them from the rest of the congregation. Holy-water, eucharistic elements, religious processions—all were either denied to them, or granted under a kind of ban. After death the bodies of these Pyrenean outcasts were interred without solemnity in a particular graveyard, or in one secluded corner of the general cemetery.

In all the relations of life these deprivations made themselves apparent. Parish registers and legal documents displayed the word '*Cagot*' as a disparaging epithet hurled at these unfortunate people. They were excluded from all honours

and public functions; and the employments permitted to them were pretty nearly confined to those of the gravedigger, sawyer, wood-cutter, and coffin-maker. Although employed sometimes as weavers, they were obliged to seek for work at a distance, as their neighbours feared they would *encagoté* or poison the cloth. They made gibbets and instruments of punishment. They were interdicted from carrying arms and iron implements, except their working tools; and equally from entering a village with bare feet, grinding their corn at the public mills, drinking at the public fountains, or washing at the public lavatories. They could own no live-stock beyond one fowl and one beast of burden; and even these could not be pastured on the common land. They could neither work nor play with their neighbours. In a court of justice their testimony was not admitted save in default of other witnesses; and the testimony of four or five *Cagots* was required to weigh equally with that of one ordinary person. They could only intermarry among themselves, union with them being regarded as dishonouring to others. They were constantly subject to shouts, cries, taunts, sneers, and insulting epithets; and if a quarrel and scuffle ensued in consequence, the luckless *Cagot* generally got the worst of it. How life could be endurable under such conditions seems a marvel.

As it was with the *Cagots* in one of the Pyrenean provinces of France, so was it with other tribes or groups of natives on both flanks of the great range, Spanish as well as French. Marca, Gébelin, Palasson, Michel, Rochas, and other competent men made personal researches in those regions, and found outcasts very much resembling in general characteristics the *Cagots*. It then appeared that these scouted and unhappy creatures were known as *Agotes* in Navarre, *Gahets* in Guienne, *Capots* in Languedoc, and *Cacous* or *Cagueux* in other provinces. In the early part of the seventeenth century, Martin de Vizcag, of Navarre, described the *Agotes* of that province, Aragon, and Béarn. Excluded from the centres of population, these pariahs were described by him as

taking refuge in deserted hovels and huts. They could fill no offices, and were not allowed to sit at table with other persons or to drink from the same cup, lest they should empoison or pollute the vessels. They could not enter a church to receive a portion of the offertory near the altar, but waited at the porch till the priest brought it out to them. Intermarriage with them was regarded almost as degrading as with the Morescoes or other non-Christians. Numerous repulsive maladies and defects were imputed to them without any just ground.

The *Gahets* of Guienne were known so far back as the end of the thirteenth century as the victims of nearly the same kind of cruel prejudices. The rejection from all the more sacred portions of the churches; the unhonoured interment in the least sacred part of the graveyard; the interdiction against dealing in cattle or poultry, and against borrowing money (with any claim, that is, to legal restitution); the forbidding to appear outside the *Gahet quartier* with bare feet, or without the bit of red cloth as a mark on the outer garments—all these prejudices were in full force. A law was also in force to prevent them from buying or sojourning in a town except on Mondays. They were also enjoined, when meeting other people in the roads or streets, to step aside as far as possible, that no contamination might come from them.

What, the reader may fairly ask, does all this mean? Were the scouted creatures really deserving of no better treatment than they received? Were they all equally bad, and in the same way, on both sides of the Pyrenees? Was the ban under which they lay of a permanent or a temporary character? French writers have arrived at diverse conclusions, in their attempts to solve these questions.

An opinion long and extensively held in France is that the *Cagots* and other ostracised provincials were descended from the Visigoths who were vanquished by Clovis; and an attempt has been made to trace the word *Cagot* up to a Béarnois word equivalent to 'Gothic dog.' But Pierre de Marca, in his *Histoire de Béarn*, shewed that this idea was ill-founded; while François de Belleforest, annalist of the kingdom of France under Charles IX., drew attention to the fact that many of the best families of Gascony, Aquitaine, and Béarn were descended from the Visigoths; and that these hardy warriors were not disfigured by such personal deformities as were imputed to the *Cagots*. In short, the Visigoth theory falls to the ground.

Another view—entertained to some extent by the *Cagots* themselves—is that they are the descendants of the Albigenses who were excommunicated by Pope Innocent III. in the early part of the thirteenth century. That those poor persecuted anti-papalists or heretics were treated like the scum of the earth, is true enough; but it has been well pointed out that the popular sympathies in those parts of France went much more with the heretics than with the popes. The Albigenses, those who escaped slaughter, mostly sought shelter in foreign lands; the remnants were pitied rather than despised by the French people generally. But the most conclusive argument against this view is that the *Cagots* were a spurned and shunned body of people at least two centuries before the Albigensis crusade. The Albigenses

must therefore share the fate of the Visigoths, in being left out in any estimate of the origin of the *Cagots*.

Pierre de Marca, who assisted in demolishing these two theories, himself believed that the *Cagots* were descended from the Moors of Spain who remained in Gascony after their general had been defeated by Charles Martel on the slopes of the Pyrenees. It has, however, been proved that the descendants of these Moors gradually became Christians, intermarried with the other French nationalities, and became blended with them into one people.

The Visigoths, the Albigenses, and the Moors being thus set aside, many other theories, some ingenious and some ludicrous, have been put forward to account for the origin of the poor *Cagots*. Caxar Arnaut, relying on what he believed to be the meaning of a particular verse in the Bible, assigned to them a Jewish origin. The Abbé Venuti suggested that they might be descended from the first Crusaders returning from the Holy Land, afflicted with some disease which rendered them loathsome to other people. M. Court de Gébelin thought he saw in them the descendants of the aborigines dwelling in the Pyrenean region, analogous to the lowest tribes known at present in India. M. F. Michel suggested that the *Cagots* may be descendants from the Spaniards who, compromised in the cause of Charlemagne by the defeat of Roland at Roncevaux, took shelter in France, where nothing but the protection by the monarchs saved them from ill-treatment on the part of the people; but a comparison of dates and localities has invalidated this theory. Lastly, a view was put forth identifying the *Cagots* with pilgrims afflicted with the distressing maladies known in France by the names of *gottre* and *cretinism*.

Sounder opinions now prevail. M. Francisque Michel, in his *Histoire des Races maudites de France et de Spain*, and M. Louis Laude, in a recent number of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, have carried almost to the stage of demonstration the evidence that *leprosy* was the origin of the cruel and ignorant treatment to which the *Cagots* were subjected. It is well known that among ancient nations, in particular the Jews, leprosy was considered as a divine chastisement for great sins. In a moral as well as a physical sense the separation of lepers from non-lepers was insisted on. The dread of contact extended to the dead as well as to the living, leading to the interment of leprous corpses in special burial-places. The Christians of the middle ages took the same view.

That it was not any particular district, in a religious or political sense, of France or Spain that was marked by undefined dread of these outcasts, is plain enough; but if we once take into view a popular belief that the *Cagots* were or had been lepers, all the rest becomes explicable. Littre and other etymologists have found in old French words many which referred to the bent, cramped, contorted figures so often to be seen among lepers, and a connection between such words and some of the names given to the outcasts. Indeed in the old Breton dialect *kakod* was a leper, and from it came *cacous*, *cagueux*, *carguots*, *cagots*. Most of the prejudices against the *Cagots*, it appears, were maintained at one time or other against lepers. The charge against them of having

fetid breath and skin; the abnormal shape of the ears; the imputation of hypocrisy, violence, lying, lasciviousness; the police regulations for keeping the tainted members of society apart from the untainted; the injunction against walking the streets with bare feet, and touching passers-by with their garments; the discredit, almost disavowal, of their evidence in a court of justice—all these were characteristic of the treatment of lepers in the middle ages; strikingly similar to those which we have seen to apply to Cagots and other outcasts.

M. de Rochas, to put this matter to a test, made many journeys to the provinces flanking the Pyrenees, under circumstances of no slight peril during a period of the civil war between the Carlists and the Constitutionals of Spain. He found everywhere that the descendants of the Cagots were just like the general inhabitants of the country in bodily and mental characteristics, betraying no foreign origin, marked by no unusual or abnormal characteristics. Inter-marriage with other peasants, it is true, he finds to be infrequent; but the people trade on equal terms, the children attend the same schools, adults and children alike go to the same churches, and the average intelligence is about on an equality. Many of them shew taints of scrofula; but these are reasonably attributable to poverty, poor and scanty diet, squalid hovels, and physical discomforts. In one of the Spanish parishes, mostly inhabited by the descendants of the once-outcasts, Rochas found the people strong and fairly intelligent, cultivating small patches of ground, rearing swine and poultry, and carrying on the same manual employments as their neighbours. They submit patiently to a few old usages of exclusion, such as the prohibition of marrying out of their own circle; but this they do because the usages are old, not clearly accounted for either by themselves or by their neighbours. In short, the small communities now to be met with are distinguishable from their neighbours—not so much by any peculiar physical or moral characteristics—as by the remembrance of an old belief, the hereditary descent of a traditional prejudice once applied to all lepers, but gradually disappearing as the dreadful disease of leprosy itself lessens in its intensity.

Until the time of the French Revolution, governments and legislatures did very little for the protection of the poor Cagots. Matters are improved now; and the prejudice is gradually dying out everywhere, although very slowly in the remote villages.

HELENA, LADY HARROGATE.

CHAPTER XLV.—FOUND IN THE DRAWER.

THE inspector was a man so reserved, quiet, and commonplace of demeanour, that an outburst of excited feeling on his part was by far more impressive on those who witnessed it than would have been the case with nine men out of any ten that could have been chosen at random. All of us have acquaintances from whom no extravagance, whether of diction or of gesture, would surprise us, who stalk the stage, as it were, throughout life's drama, and play some grand heroic part even in what would otherwise be humdrum discussions over their butchers' bills and the accounts of their laundress. Inspector

Drew of the detective police was of another composition. His calling brought him into contact with some of the most startling phases of our modern civilisation; but he endured them, as a rule, with the stoical equanimity of a true philosopher. Wickedness was with him the subject of a professional study, over which he manifested neither pain nor indignation, but the illegal varieties of which it was his duty to bring to condign punishment. It took a good deal to excite the inspector.

The inspector was for once all on fire with an excitement which was not long in communicating itself to the other two occupants of the room. Lord Harrogate readily divined that some clue to the discovery which it was his purpose to make had been thus unexpectedly found; while the landlady of the *Dolphin*, with all her sex's sympathy with the marvellous, was ready to give credence to the policeman had he announced himself the finder of Aladdin's Lamp or the long-lost secret of Hermes Trismegistus.

'It's—it's the—other half of the card!' gasped out Inspector Drew faintly, and concealing, by some odd instinct, the prize within his outstretched hand. 'I'd not have believed it, not though I'd seen it in print,' he added, staggering rather than walking back to his chair and dropping heavily upon it. 'This kind of thing takes a man's breath away, it does.'

Mrs Diver, seeing how white the detective's rubicund face had suddenly become, suggested 'cordial,' and produced a tempting-looking bottle and glass from a corner cupboard. But Inspector Drew, albeit as fond, in moderation, of a timely portion of good liquor as any other man could be, declined the dram, even though it came under the seductive name of cordial, and rallied his nerves and his wits without alcoholic aid.

'Now, my lord,' he said in a voice that, tremulous at first, grew steadier as he proceeded, 'this is one of those chances that one don't tumble upon twice, says you, in a lifetime; and so, as perfect openness is in the nature of things the wisest policy, and this good lady has at heart the interests of the young lady concerned, I make so bold as to speak freely of the matter in her presence. I make no doubt too that your lordship has about you the half-card that has been our guide throughout. Might I ask your lordship to produce it?'

'Here it is, certainly,' said Lord Harrogate, as he laid the moiety of the card on the red cover of Mrs Diver's loo-table.

'And here's the fellow of it,' responded the inspector, as he clapped down beside it another piece of torn card, the jagged edges of which fitted exactly with those of the other half. 'There it is!' cried the inspector, hoarse and almost indistinct in his eagerness. 'There it is! See! "Standish" is engraved on the one, and "Captain F." on the other. See again, the "Grena" that goes with the "dier Guards," and the exact match of the bits of pasteboard, every notch and projection corresponding. Why, it's like what it would have been, when there was the old gurnment lottery, buying two half-numbers at random, and finding they made up the one number that won the thirty thousand pound prize! Hurrah!' And by way of a relief to his feelings, the detective flung his hat into the corner of the room, and

administered to an unoffending footstool, covered with faded worsted-work, and presented to Mrs Diver by some patroness from amongst the county families, a kick that sent it noisily into an opposite angle of the parlour. Indifferent to the fate of hat or footstool, the inspector whipped out his horn-mounted arrangement of lenses, and began to survey the newly found card with their help, as minutely and as patiently as the curator of an entomological museum could examine the wing-cases and antennæ of a hitherto unique beetle.

'There's pencil-writing here too,' said the policeman after a lengthened scrutiny; 'but it's too many for me—rubbed as it is. Something like an *H* I fancy I can see.'

Lord Harrogate too thought that one of the almost effaced marks of pencilling on the back of the lately found portion of the card might represent the letter *H*. He thought too that the writer of the disjointed memoranda was identical. Then Mrs Diver, as a matter of politeness, was requested to take her turn as a decipherer. To the surprise of her visitors, she drew forth from between the leaves of an illustrated book that lay on the table a piece of silver paper, laid it lightly and smoothly over the card, and then accepted the inspector's proffered glasses.

'I learned this way,' she said, 'years ago, from an artist gentlemen who was here sketching, and meant, I am sure, to remit the amount of his bill, as he promised, from London. It does act in a contrary manner to what may be at first supposed, and—ah! yes, I make out the *H* and an *o* and then *l* and then *d*.'

'H-o-l-d! Why, that spells Hold!' cried Lord Harrogate, overjoyed.

'And then follows the name "Gray—Gray," written twice, and scored through the first time, and next, much smaller, "Post-office." That seems to be all,' said Mrs Diver, wiping the glasses.

Further examination confirmed the landlady's original reading of the almost obliterated pencil-marks.

'Hold—Gray—Gray—Post-office,' could yet, though very faintly, be distinguished on the lately recovered portion of the torn card.

'The Post-office, I conclude, may have been used as a concerted place of meeting between the principal in this affair and his agent,' said Lord Harrogate; 'and the former may have written down not merely the name of his confederate, but that by which he chose to be known in Sandston, the pencilled memorandum being designed to meet no other eye than his own. But as to how the torn card came into the drawer, and how it came to be preserved for so long, I am somewhat at a loss to conjecture.'

'Twenty ways, my lord, as to the first,' said the inspector readily; 'such as the card being entangled in the cloak or jacket or something or other the little lady wore. More likely though it was Mr Gray, as he called himself, let it drop unawares. When men are excited, they are always pulling things out of their pockets restlessly, and don't always put them safe back again. And then, if this good lady has had a habit, and I'm sure a very nice habit, of never throwing away anything that might be useful—why, this card, to judge by the marks on it and this little nick in one corner, which seems as if it had been made with scissors

such as those neat little cards I see sticking out of the work-basket, having been used for the winding of silk, how easy it might have been picked up from the carpet afterwards, and popped into a drawer without a second look or a second thought, and then used years after, mayhap!'

'The gentleman's guessed right,' thoughtfully returned Mrs Diver; 'right, that is as regards a way I've got of keeping by me, against a needful day, odds and ends that others would send to the dust-bin. "Waste not, want not," was the word when I was young; and I've never forgot a saying of my poor mother's about keeping a thing seven years and then finding a use for it at last. So I may have picked up, when tidying the room, this scrap of torn card, and may have put it from custom in the drawer. Anyhow, I must have used it, for there's a fluff of the green purse silk I generally put along with red into the purses I made to give away among my friends, when silk purses were the rage.'

'It is for me to congratulate myself,' said Lord Harrogate, smiling, 'that this thrifty practice has enabled me, as I trust under heaven, to right a cruel wrong, and sweep away as with a besom the vile web of fraudulent imposture that dares to bar the way of Truth and Justice.'

CHAPTER XLVII.—UNDER A NEW NAME.

'Your duty to leave us, Miss Gray? Your duty to go, without a word of explanation as to the cause of so very singular and unexpected a resolve? Upon my word, young lady, you astonish me!' And indeed Lady Wolverhampton did look the very picture of bewilderment. She liked Ethel much, and was aware that her girls liked her more. She was thoroughly satisfied with the ex-mistress of the village school, both as an instructress for Lady Alice and as an inmate of the house at High Tor, and had often congratulated herself on the chance that had brought Miss Gray beneath her roof. And here was this incomprehensible young person suddenly insisting that she must resign her situation and go away, and only praying that she might not be closely questioned as to the motive for such a resolution.

'Again, dear Lady Wolverhampton, I must beg of you not to ask me why I go,' pleaded Ethel. 'Believe me, that it is a sorrowful change for me, and that it has cost me much to bring myself to do what I feel is right.'

And here the tears welled up in her eyes again, and she turned her face away. They were not the first tears shed since last Lord Harrogate had spoken of his love. Through anxious days and sleepless nights Ethel had been thinking, thinking, and the summary of her reflections was that honour bade her leave the place where she had been so happy, and the family of which the future chief had stooped to woo her for his bride. That, of course, could never be. Yet Lord Harrogate must return; and should he be of the same mind still, her constancy might not always endure as it had hitherto done, and some word of assent or encouragement be wrung from her lips.

Ethel had made up her mind that she must go; and all the arguments and entreaties of her friend Lady Maud and her pupil Lady Alice could not dissuade her from her purpose. Then her intention had been made known to the mistress of the

house, and Lady Wolverhampton had in her turn expostulated, but without result.

'I know very well,' said she, eyeing Ethel as though she were some natural phenomenon, 'that times have altered a good deal; but I can only say that when I was young myself this sort of thing could hardly have happened.'

The honest Countess was one of those to whom the rising, or at anyrate the junior generation, present a standing puzzle. The days in which she had learned her little chapter of the world's great book had been simpler days than these latter ones, and people's motives, if not purer, were at all events very much more intelligible than they now were. When George the Magnificent reigned over us, when the Sailor-king hoisted his flag at Windsor, and when Queen Victoria was a young queen, domestic servitude wore another aspect from that which it now wears. The harsh drill-sergeant Want kept the needy under smarter discipline than modern usages exact. To lose a place was for a servant a misfortune only second to some bodily hurt. And a governess was as much averse to being flung off into the bare, bleak, blank world of poverty as even a servant.

Lady Wolverhampton was vexed and almost angry at Ethel's defection. She knew that young people were nowadays prone to do the oddest things, turning into Sisters of Mercy, shipping for Australia or the Dominion, going off at short notice to some New Zealand dairy, or flinging themselves on the Indian marriage market, or becoming public performers, or Red Cross Ladies in time of war, or shop-girls, porcelain-painters, lecturers, or lady-helps. These avenues of employment had all sprung into being since the Countess formed her first conceptions of right and wrong; but it annoyed her that Ethel should take to any of them. She had been so pleased with Ethel—and how now was she to look for a governess to replace her!

'I am quite sure of one thing,' said Lady Maud, whose own eyes were sympathetically moist; 'whatever Miss Gray's reason may be, it is a good one, and worthy of one whom we have all loved so well.'

Just then there came the sound of wheels, the barking of dogs, and the clang of a bell. But these sounds attracted little notice, for now young Lady Alice burst out into a petulant outbreak of grief and anger.

'Miss Gray,' she declared, 'was cruel, unfriendly, unjust, and unkind, to go away and leave High Tor and all who cared for her just for a whim. It was scandalous, heartless, unpardonable. Of course, Miss Gray—for Lady Alice would never, never call her Ethel again—'might please herself; but it was none the less cruel conduct, mean, and unworthy of her.'

Having said which, weeping the while, with a flushed cheek and quivering lip, Lady Alice became incoherent in her reproaches, and refused to be comforted, repulsing all Ethel's well-meant efforts to soothe her.

'I'll never call you Ethel more,' cried the indignant girl—'never, never!'

'I don't think you will, Alice,' answered an unexpected voice—the voice of the Earl himself. The Earl was in the room by this, followed by Lord Harrogate. 'I don't think you will,' he repeated, walking straight up to where Ethel

stood, and bending down to press his lips, in fatherly fashion, on her white forehead. 'I must be the first to kiss you, Helena, my dear, the first to welcome beneath this poor roof of mine, by her true name, the kinswoman who has the best right to its hospitality—poor cousin Clare's child—Helena, Lady Harrogate!'

No one there present could ever quite clearly recall, in later days, the scene that followed, the outcries, the astonishment, the excited talk, the marble pallor of Ethel's lovely face, as, with eyes that had grown dim and heart scarce throbbing, she clung to Lady Maud, sobbing in her arms, and murmured again and again the child-like question, 'Can it be true—true of me?'

It was noticeable that no one, save Ethel herself, for a moment doubted the truth of the good news. Even the Countess put fullest faith in the tale which her son had to tell, in the reality of the discovery which had placed a coronet on the brow of a poor and nameless girl. There was much eager curiosity as to the manner in which the riddle had been solved, but of its solution all were satisfied. It had been far otherwise when Miss Willis had been ostentatiously proclaimed at Carbery heiress to the De Vere honours. Wonder, suspicion, resentment, had then been the prevalent feelings; but now the Earl's daughters clustered round their new-found cousin with soft words and fond caresses, and vowed that they could never love her better than they had done as dear Ethel, and that she would give, instead of borrowing, lustre to the ancient race to which they all belonged.

And then Lord Harrogate, with a flushed cheek, rallied all his fortitude, since he felt it due to Ethel herself, to say what he had to say publicly. He could not have given a stronger proof of his attachment; for an educated Englishman, even before a kindred audience, has an almost hydrophobic horror of that dramatic effect which is as mother's milk to the more demonstrative Frenchman.

'Once—twice,' he said, going up to Ethel, 'I have told you that I loved you, and have asked you to be my wife. If you were, as I learn, about to quit High Tor, and leave the friends that you had made, it was, as I suspect, to shield yourself by absence from addresses which a noble sense of duty urged you to reject.—Father—mother—you hear me—hear me now renew my suit, and crave for our cousin's love, now that the noblest in Europe might acknowledge her for their equal.'

Very often, afterwards, Ethel Gray—let us still call her so—attempted to recall to her memory the precise answer which she had given to Lord Harrogate's public proposal of marriage, but it all seemed like a confused dream of mazy happiness, and all that was certain was that everybody kissed and was kissed by everybody else, and all talked and none listened; and the betrothal was assumed and sanctioned and blessed and joyed over without Ethel's having ever pronounced the actual word 'Yes' from first to last.

'If it is possible to be glad of so terrible a calamity,' said the Earl at last, when the conversation became more general. 'I cannot but rejoice that I am not to be the means of bringing punishment down upon the head of one with whom I have been on terms of neighbourly amity. To poor Sir Sykes, in his present helpless state, man's justice signifies little; yet there is no doubt

but that he was the pseudo-widower, the false Mr Gray, in person, and that the buccaneering rascal Hold has long terrorised over him by working on his fears and his remorse.'

'That miserable creature—whom we knew as Miss Willis—what will become of her?' said Lady Maud, pity and indignation mingling in her voice as she spoke.

'Being of the weaker sex, and presumably a tool of Hold's, she will not be very severely dealt with, I suspect,' said Lord Harrogate. 'To-night, however, or to-morrow, Inspector Drew will arrive with the necessary warrant from the Home Office, and our pirate friend yonder will probably find Carberry too hot to hold him much longer. It is odd though, as to Miss Willis, how strangely her face comes back to my recollection as having been seen in a shop somewhere.'

'That can scarcely be,' said Lady Gladys; 'we were all told, when she arrived, that she was fresh from India.'

'Yes, Gladys,' said the Earl cheerily; 'we were told that, and a good deal more; but we were afterwards required to believe that the interesting ward was of our own race, and this was more than we could take on trust. The sooner that clever young lady vanishes from the scene now, the better for her, I should say. Two Kings of Brentford, as the saying is, would not be worse than two Ladies Harrogate, in their own right, in a quiet Devonshire parish; and Miss Willis and her ally Hold may be assured that the tables have turned at last, and that a heavy day of reckoning is at hand.'

STAR-FISHES.

ON a previous occasion we described those curious creatures the 'Sea-eggs'—the *Echini* of the zoologist. In the present paper we intend to say something about the Star-fishes, which are not merely common denizens of our rock-pools and coasts, but also boast of being very near relations of the sea-eggs themselves. The name 'star-fish' in some parts of the country is superseded by the terms 'cross-fish' and 'five-fingers.' Each name applies distinctively to the commonest species of these animals found on our coasts, the Common Star-fish (*Uroaster rubens*). This animal is so familiar that any description of its outward appearance is almost unnecessary. We see a body which appears to consist almost entirely of five rays. There is very little 'body' or 'disc' to be noticed in the common star-fish—the name 'disc' applying to the central portion from which the rays may be supposed to spring. The surface of the body is rough and studded with a great many little prominences and miniature spines, and the skin itself is not only of a tough, leathery consistence, but contains living particles which in their own humble way represent the more perfect development of that mineral we see in the shell of the 'sea-egg.'

As we observe a star-fish cast up by the unkindly waves on the beach, it certainly appears to be one of the most helpless and forlorn of creatures. Drop it into the nearest rock-pool however, and the aspect of matters will soon

appear changed. The star-fish will then be seen to move slowly and circumspectly over the bed of the pool, and to present the appearance of an animal thoroughly at home. The under surface of the star-fish certainly offers for our observation a greater abundance of features than the upper surface. Below and in the centre of the body we see the mouth which, however, is unprovided with the teeth or jaws, that form so marked a feature of the 'sea-eggs.' Stretching like five avenues from this central mouth we find the rays, and on their under surface, packed one would think to an extreme degree, are to be seen the numerous curious little structures called tube-feet by means of which the star-fish walks. Each tube-foot consists of a little muscular pipe, provided at its tip with a sucker, enabling the animal to hold on firmly to any surface to which the foot may be applied. We are therefore not surprised at the ready fashion in which the star-fish crawls about. With hundreds of tube-feet in each ray, the body is slowly but surely borne over all the inequalities of rock-pool or sea-bed.

The mechanism by which these tube-feet act resembles that through which the similar 'feet' of the sea-eggs are put in operation. But the subject is so interesting that a recapitulation of the locomotive arrangements in these animals may be briefly given. The entire system of tube-feet in the star-fish is set in operation, so to speak, through the agency of water. The tube-feet of each ray are attached to a main-pipe which runs along the groove of the ray in which the feet are placed. And this main-pipe in its turn takes its origin from a circular vessel surrounding the mouth internally. At the base of each tube-foot—that is where the foot is attached to the main-pipe—a little muscular bag exists; and we may lastly note that the whole system of pipes—main-pipe, circular vessel, tube-feet, and their sacs or bags—is placed in communication with the outer world by another tube, the function of which is to admit water to the system. Suppose now, that the star-fish intends to make a tour of its abode. Water will first be admitted to the circular vessel, and from that vessel will run through the main-pipe in each ray, ultimately filling the bags or sacs at the bases of the tube-feet. These bags, like the feet, are muscular; and hence by their contraction the fluid is forced into the feet. The latter are thus distended and rendered tense, and the suckers can therefore be firmly applied to the surface over which the star-fish is proceeding. When on the other hand the star-fish comes to rest, or when it is tossed up on the beach by the waves and we find its tube-feet empty and flaccid, we see the effects of the escape of the water which formerly filled them, and without which the creature is unable to seek 'fresh fields and pastures new.'

It is not our intention to describe minutely the internal anatomy of the star-fish, although there are some few points which even the reader,

unfamiliar with zoology, may find it interesting to know. The mouth is found to lead into a stomach which, curiously enough, sends processes into each ray. The stomach of the star-fish is thus a capacious organ, and partakes of the general symmetry or shape of its body. According to trustworthy accounts, the star-fish would seem to make rather a peculiar use of its stomach-sac. The fisherman views the star-fishes with disgust, and no wonder, when he finds half his baited hooks attacked by these, to him, useless creatures; and oyster-dredgers regard them with the most unfavourable eyes. The cause of this animosity is, in the statement of the dredgers, that star-fishes are the enemies of oysters, and devour large quantities of these molluscs. We can understand how the star-fish fastens to a naked bait, but how it is enabled to destroy the oyster was long regarded as a puzzling question. The idea that the star-fish inserted one of its rays within the shell of the oyster, and thus forced it to open its shell, is of course untenable. Oysters are very wary animals as far as the opening of their shells is concerned; and the quick action of the mollusc in closing its shell whenever it is touched, shews the impossibility of a sluggish animal like the star-fish attacking the citadel of the oyster in the manner just described. A sea-side observation made by naturalists in past years, and confirmed by the writer, makes clear the manner in which star-fishes may be able to assault the oyster. Visitors to the sea-side may frequently find star-fishes apparently rolled into a rounded form, and tossed up on the beach just after the tide has receded. If one of these star-fishes be uncoiled and examined it will be found to inclose some unfortunate whelk or periwinkle which is being slowly devoured. The victim is found to be applied close to the mouth of the star-fish, and when it is pulled away from the mouth, a clear jelly-like bag is seen to be slowly withdrawn from the victim's shell into the mouth of the star-fish. This bag is the stomach, which the star-fish appears enabled to evert and protrude, with the result it is supposed of irritating or poisoning its victim, and also of absorbing its soft parts. Whether this latter is the true explanation or not, the observation on the habits of the star-fish which any one may make during a sea-side visit appears to favour the idea that the star-fish first renders the mollusc helpless, and then absorbs it by a curious application of the stomach.

Our star-fish possesses a system of nerves, and its chief sense-organs appear to be the eyes which, curiously enough, are placed at the tips of its rays. The situation of the simple eyes of the animal is peculiar, and although they can hardly be supposed to exercise a true sense of sight as represented in higher animals, they may nevertheless be regarded as useful to the animal in making it acquainted with so much of its surroundings. As the star-fish crawls along, the eyes appear at any rate to be satisfactorily placed at the tips of the rays, and a small tentacle or feeler is also found in this situation, being placed just above the eye. In the sea-eggs, the curious little organisms known as *pedicellariæ* were noted to occur. These latter are minute bodies, each consisting of a stalk bearing a pair of snapping jaws at its extremity. The *pedicellariæ* are attached to the little spines of the star-fish and to its outer surface generally. The nature of these curious

little jaws and how or why they move—even after the death of the star-fish—are items in their history of which no good explanation has yet been given.

Our star-fish begins its life in a somewhat different fashion and appearance from that in which it passes its mature years. The young star-fish is, in the vast majority of species, unlike the adult. It appears as a little free-swimming body known as *Bipinnaria*, and when first discovered by naturalists, its relations to the star-fish were utterly unsuspected. The most curious part of its development, however, consists in the fact that the real and future star-fish is developed within this *Bipinnaria*, from a limited part of the body of the latter. The young star-fish is formed and grows at the expense of its representative, and what remains of the *Bipinnaria* after the young star-fish has been formed, is cast off and perishes.

As we have already remarked, the name 'star-fish' is applied especially to denote the common 'five-fingered' animal of our sea-beaches. That there are a number of other animals which also possess a rightful claim to this title is a well-known fact. The 'Sun-stars' with their thirteen or sixteen rays, are also 'star-fishes' in the true sense of the term; and the little 'Sand-stars' and 'Brittle-stars' which are brought up in the dredge, claim the title of star-fishes equally with the foregoing examples. The 'Sand-stars' are active little creatures, whose rays are mere appendages to the body, and are not so much parts of the body itself as in the common star-fish. They do not move about by means of tube-feet, but by the active movements of their rays, and a mass of these star-fishes just dredged presents a curious appearance as they lie twisting and coiling their rays in the meshes of the net. The 'Brittle-stars' obtain their distinctive title from the readiness with which they part with their arms. Indeed, it is a highly difficult matter to obtain a perfect specimen of a brittle-star. Edward Forbes has left us a humorous description of his endeavour to capture one of these animals in a perfect state. He had in readiness a pail of fresh-water into which the brittle-star was meant to be placed as it came up in the dredge, in the hope of killing it ere it had time to get rid of its rays. The star-fish was just introduced into the bucket, when it parted with its rays, literally separating itself into fragments; Professor Forbes in despair grasping 'the extremity of an arm with its terminating eye, the spinous eyelid of which opened and closed with something exceedingly like a wink of derision.'

If, however, self-mutilation is common amongst the star-fishes, no less well represented is the power of reproducing lost parts. In a sea-side ramble we may find star-fishes consisting of a body, and one ray—the other members having likely been torn away by some voracious fish. But *nil desperandum* is the motto of the star-fish. Given sufficient time and favourable surroundings, and the maimed body will develop new rays and parts to replace the old, and will appear in due time as a living testimony to the wondrous powers of reparation which some of Nature's creatures possess.

Recent observations on the star-fishes, and their neighbours the sea-eggs, and sea-cucumbers or trepangs, have revealed the interesting fact that

many of these creatures not only hatch their eggs within their bodies, but carry their young in special pouches or receptacles for lengthened periods. The kangaroos amongst quadrupeds are known to carry the young for a considerable period in the *marsupium* or pouch. It is therefore highly interesting to find an analogous instance of protection of the young in the star-fishes and their neighbours; and there is one star-fish known—a species of Brittle-star—which would actually seem to imitate the opossums, since it carries its young on its back. That much yet remains to be discovered in the history and habits of the star-fishes, no one may doubt. But we trust enough has been said to shew that there are many studies of a much less elevating nature and of less interesting kind which a sea-side visitor may undertake, than the investigation of the ways of star-fishes.

TESTED.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.—CHAPTER I.

‘THANKS for your advice, old fellow; it’s thoroughly good and thoroughly well meant; I am sure of both these facts; at the same time, forgive me for saying I can’t take it.’

‘And I’ll do you the further justice of admitting that you didn’t ask me for it.’

‘Good-bye till to-morrow morning at eleven sharp,’ the first speaker replied, jumping as he spoke, off the gate on which he had been sitting. ‘Wish me joy, and do your best to make my peace with the girls; your wife will do her best for me, I know.’

The other man wished Leonard Bell joy and good-bye heartily enough; but as he passed out of sight and hearing, the man, who still remained leaning against the gate, shook his head rather moodily, and said to himself: ‘Poor old boy! you’re wrong about my wife for once; in marrying beneath you, you offend one of her strongest prejudices. I know how her head will go up, and how she will “wonder how Leonard could fall in love with vulgarity after having been intimate with me!” What a world we live in! Bell with a wife he could have been proud of, would have had the ball at his feet in a short time; as it is’

— He checked himself abruptly, and with a shrug of the shoulders, that did not betoken too much sanguine expectation concerning his friend’s future, walked slowly back to the village where he was staying until such time as Leonard Bell bachelor should be transformed into Leonard Bell benedict.

Considerably older than the man whose matrimonial project had just been on the *tapis*, and endowed with considerably more experience of the world, Mr Linton had not distrusted his powers to put a stop to the ill-advised marriage Leonard seemed bent on making, up to the present morning. The knowledge of the handsome, cultivated, refined young artist’s engagement to a girl who had been accountant and head-barmaid at an hotel in an adjoining town, had only been in

Mr Linton’s possession for the last four days. Instantly on the receipt of the letter containing the (to him) sad intelligence, he had left London, and sought Leonard in the little village on the borders of the breezy Sussex downs, where the enchantress held him in bondage until the fatal knot could be tied legally; and it is but fair to Mrs Linton to say that it was her influence which urged her husband to take such immediate action.

The journey was fruitless as far as prevention went. Leonard loved the girl for her fine animal beauty, and thought there was something piquant in her pronunciation, which was sufficiently coarse to have cured him utterly, had not the aforesaid animal beauty affected his senses in a way that deadened his perceptive faculties.

‘She’s as pure as an angel, as lovely as Venus, and as unsophisticated as a child!’ he replied rapturously, when Mr Linton asked him into what circle he supposed it probable that he would be able to introduce his bride. ‘She’d adorn any circle, sir; and if my circle thinks itself too good for her, why, I shall not attempt to enter its sacred precincts myself. If she is not fit for it, neither am I.’

‘A man is bound to stand by the woman to whom he gives his name,’ Mr Linton replied sentimentally. But he thought: ‘A man who gives his name to a woman so far beneath him socially, himself becomes unfit for a circle so greatly above her.’ He only thought this, however; he refrained from saying it, and wounding Leonard’s feelings more deeply than he had already done by the honest though measured terms in which he had expressed his disapprobation of the unequal match.

The bridal morning dawned, and the bells rang out merrily from the old parish church over the cowslip and buttercup spangled meadows, telling the tidings of the handsome young gentleman-artist’s nuptials with the pretty daughter of the Priory steward. There was, however, nothing merry in their pealing, in the ears of Mr Linton. The golden radiance of the meadows annoyed him, as it seemed to be typical of that rustic beauty and simplicity which had wrought the social ruin of his friend and favourite Leonard Bell. ‘If the sun would only cloud over, it would be more in accordance with my feelings than all this glare and stir,’ he said to himself, as he made his way to the church. But the bells went on ringing, the flowers went on blooming, and the sun went on shining in a way that proved each and all to be utterly regardless of Harry Linton’s feelings and of Leonard Bell’s future.

Presently the wedding-party entered. It was small and as silent as the nature of the case would admit of its being. The mother of the bride, Mrs Waller, led the way, leaning on the arm of her son, a fine brawny young man, who held the post of farm-bailiff at the Priory, now that his father’s age unfitted him for active service. A good, honest, hearty-looking fellow, carrying his six feet easily and manfully enough. ‘A nice-looking fellow for his class,’ Mr Linton instantly admitted; ‘but not the sort of man that Bell can ever introduce to his sisters and my wife as his brother-in-law.’

Following the mother and brother came the two sisters as bride’s-maids. Prettily, quietly, and

becomingly dressed, they looked like what they were, respectable young country-town shopwomen. And last of all came the bride, led by her venerable handsome-headed old father, who in all the dignity of his unstained integrity and well-earned independence, might have sat for the portrait of the Miller of the Dee.

'Undoubtedly a handsome girl,' was Mr Linton's verdict, as he caught sight of the well-cut features and the rich blooming brunette complexion of the girl, who had in some mysterious manner caused the fastidious caste-loving Leonard Bell to forswear his social creed. 'If she's teachable and tractable, above all if she's imitative, she may take the place his wife should take—in time; but at present he will blush for her as soon as he sees her side by side with a gentlewoman. She looks wonderfully well, though; how will it be when she opens her mouth?'

He soon had an opportunity of judging, for as soon as the service was over, the whole party adjourned to the vestry to sign the registers, in attestation of their having witnessed the holy and lawful ceremony. With the ardour of a lover and of an owner proud of his new possession, Leonard Bell took his bride's hand and presented Mr Linton to her as his 'earliest and best friend.'

Something in the younger man's voice and manner, some singular mixture of pride and deprecation, touched the elder and more worldly-wise man into displaying greater cordiality and tenderness towards the newly-made wife than he would otherwise have exhibited. For a moment he allowed himself to forget the gap that custom and culture made between them, and bowing over her hand with the same amount of courtesy and respect he would have shewn for a princess, he said that he 'wished her every form of happiness and prosperity that her heart could desire, both for Leonard's sake and her own.'

Slight as the ordeal was, she could not pass through it unscathed. To her new friend's intense disappointment, to the equally intense mortification of her husband, Mrs Leonard Bell tossed her pretty head after the manner of a stage *soubrette* whom she had once much admired at a provincial theatre, and replied, with a jaunty and highly artificial assumption of being perfectly at ease: 'Thank you, Mr Linton; and I am sure you'll find no difference in the welcome you'll get at our house, though Mr Bell is married; and that's not what every wife would say to the friends her husband hobnobbed with in his bachelor days.'

'This is not one of my bachelor friends, you must understand, Ellen dear,' Leonard began explaining, in an agony of confusion; but 'Ellen dear' knew she had created a sensation by her last remark, and was determined to deepen the impression her *aplomb* had produced on one of 'Leonard's stuck-up friends,' and give him the opportunity of assuring that mystic 'set' of Leonard's, of which she had heard faint rumours, that 'Mrs Leonard Bell was well able to take care of herself.'

'And it's not every young lady that will speak civil to her husband's old lady-friends, I can tell you. There was my companion at the'—She stopped suddenly, checked by a look of agonised entreaty on her husband's face, and with a loud laugh and another jaunty toss of the head, turned to another subject. 'We'll go back to breakfast now; for we must all be that hungry. I'm sure

that we shall all do full justice to whatever you have had provided, Ma'.—I'm sure it was very good of you, Mr Linton, to come down to this hole of a place to do honour to our wedding; and we should have been very glad to have seen your wife with you, and then she and I could have struck up a friendship, you know, and so have been able to run in and out and have a gossip with each other, as soon as I got to London, and was settled in my own home.'

'So this is Leonard Bell's wife!' Mr Linton thought. 'The woman he has selected from all the world to bear his name, to be the mother of his children, solace his lot, and sympathise with his highest aspirations!'

CHAPTER II.

'The happy pair are coming home to-day; aren't they?' Mr Linton said one morning, a few weeks after the Bells' marriage. 'Yes,' he went on, consulting his note-book, without waiting for his wife's reply; 'this is the day, the third of July. Couldn't you send a line round to await them, Kate, and ask them here to dinner?'

A pretty, sparkling-faced, graceful-mannered woman rose quickly as he spoke, and went over to bestow some trifling loving attention on the flowers in her window-garden before she replied: 'I have never been able to extract a single word of description from you about Mrs Leonard Bell. Why should I bring her on myself in this intimate way, until I know whether or not the intimacy will be congenial to us both?'

'Don't get on preliminary stilts, Kate,' he answered laughing. 'Leonard owes a good deal to you in one way and another; don't make him feel the debt too keenly, by keeping his wife at arm's-length.'

'What is she like, Harry? Tell me.'

'A very handsome richly coloured brunette; tall, well grown, and'—

'Shy?'

'Not at all; remarkably self-possessed.'

'Ah! now, do give me fuller information. You have been so strangely reticent about it all. She is either a person whom you expect to fairly dazzle me, or she is some one whom it would have been well for Leonard not to have married.'

'I shall leave you to draw your own conclusions when you meet her,' said Mr Linton, rising, and preparing to get himself away to his office. 'Remember this: you have helped to popularise Leonard in society, you have worked his name up in the press, and you have conferred the distinction of your openly avowed friendship upon him. Don't attempt to neutralise the effect of all these things by shewing him the cold-shoulder, even if you don't happen to like his choice of a wife.'

'His sister's fears are well founded, and our boy has made a mistake, I fear—oh, how I fear it!' muttered Mrs Linton to herself, as her husband went out of the room. 'However, Harry is right. I, who have spoilt him, and taught him to believe in the infallibility of his own judgment, must be the last one to shew that it is a mistake, if it turns out to be one; the world will do that sharply and speedily enough.'

Mrs Linton debated the question of the propriety of the proposition her husband had made as to inviting the bride and bridegroom to dine

with them (the Lintons) this day of their return, up to mid-day. Then kindness and curiosity combined to make her pen the following note:

DEAR MRS BELL.—My husband and I, as old friends of your husband's, who wish with as little delay as possible to become friends of yours also, trust that you and Leonard will waive ceremony, and dine with us *en famille* to-night at seven.—Believe me, with kindest regards to you both, yours truly

KATE LINTON.

This note, written in all friendliness, was sent round to the artist's house by a messenger, who was charged to wait for an answer, if Mr and Mrs Bell were at home. Sent in kindness and courtesy, we shall see how it was received, in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

The husband and wife had been home for about an hour when Mrs Linton's note was delivered to Mrs Leonard Bell. On the whole, this hour that he had passed in the home, which was dainty and delicately decorated with the indescribable taste of an art-loving man, was the happiest he had passed since his marriage. The pictures and the statuettes, the bronzes and harmoniously coloured pieces of old china, the oriental rugs and carved oak buffets, were all dear and familiar, fraught with delightful associations, charged every one of them with pleasant memories of friends of his own class, whose very existence he had forgotten while the glamour was over him about Ellen Price. Additionally, he could gaze at and study these beautiful objects with the sure conviction that they would never speak and shock him out of all admiration for them by faulty pronunciation and coarse tones.

It had come to this, unfortunately. His wife's beauty was as great as it had ever been, greater indeed, for he had modified and toned down her dress with such taste that it would have been difficult to find a better or more becomingly costumed woman than Mrs Leonard Bell in the most *recherché* set in London. But he had found himself utterly unable to modify or tone down her provincial accent and coarse colloquialisms. The underbred girl who had been the belle of the bar, flattered, courted, and admired by the very lowest and worst class of bagmen, believed herself to be fully equal to the situation she was now filling, and laughed to scorn any attempt her husband made to cultivate her intellect and get her to cast off at least the outer shell of ignorance.

The hour had been the happiest he had passed since his marriage, for at least his surroundings were dear and congenial to him. But it had not been unalloyed happiness which he had tasted. He had purposely timed their return for the middle of the day, in order that he might have several hours of daylight at his disposal, during which he might be able to inoculate his wife with something like an admiration of and appreciation for some of the art treasures which he had obtained at the cost of many years of hard work at his art, and the sacrifice of many a merely social or selfish pleasure.

'I'll shew you your kingdom from garret to basement, Nellie dear,' he said to the lady as soon as she had avowed herself to be sufficiently 'rested'

to undertake the tour of inspection after her journey. She had sailed into the dining-room and cast anchor in that haven immediately on entering the house, and though she was delighted at the affluence displayed in its fittings-up and furniture, she would not avow that delight, for fear Leonard should think she 'hadn't seen as good many and many a time' at the houses of some wealthy but extremely mythical relations whom she was in the habit of quoting.

'The attics!' she exclaimed in affected surprise; 'what should ladies do in the attics, Leonard? No; I'm too tired to go up that 'ight;' and just as she said this the letter came from Mrs Linton.

'Well, well! read your note, and then we will go up to the drawing-room,' he said good-humouredly; but his brow burnt, for the servant who had brought in the letter had missed her mistress's 'h'; and he knew that his wife's former social status was guessed at once pretty correctly by at least one of his faithful servitors.

'It's from the wife of that gentleman who came to our wedding, Len; she asks us there to dinner to-night,' Mrs Bell cried out with an air of pleasure that was natural, and therefore agreeable to her husband.

'Jolly of her!' he responded with enthusiasm, for Mrs Linton had proved herself one of his fastest and truest friends for many a year; and the dread had come into his mind more than once since his marriage that the wife he had chosen would not be likely to cement the union. 'Jolly of her! It's just like her to be the first to shew you kindness. We go of course.'

'I am not so sure about that,' Mrs Bell replied with a pout. 'If she's as stuck-up as her husband is, I'm in no hurry to know her; and as for shewing me kindness, I could have my dinner at home, I suppose. Besides, she doesn't know me yet, so it's for you the kindness is shewn, not for me.'

'We won't argue about that, darling,' he replied affectionately. A good deal of the glamour that her positive beauty had cast over him was gone; but he remembered that he had selected her from all the world, and that he had removed her from her own sphere and her own friends; and remembering these things, he was careful that she should find nothing wanting in him. Accordingly he called her 'darling' affectionately, though her burst of self-importance struck him as being singularly ill-timed.

'Write a line to Mrs Linton, Nellie, and tell her we have much pleasure in accepting her friendly invitation,' he went on, wheeling a small writing-table up to her; and after some slight demur, Nellie did as she was desired to do; but she did it with a bad grace; and Leonard Bell began to have his visions of pleasure consequent on the renewal of intercourse with Mrs Linton, tinged with nervous apprehension of his wife's possible antagonism.

It was undoubtedly a trying moment for them all when he led his bride into Mrs Linton's drawing-room that evening. As far as appearance went he had every reason to be satisfied with his wife; for she had dressed according to his directions, and was looking splendidly handsome. He watched eagerly for the effect she would produce on a woman whose predominant characteristics were refinement and tact; and he felt, with a pang of

bitter mortification, that it would require a good deal of the latter quality to enable Mrs Linton to conceal what a shock it was to the former one to see on whom his choice had fallen.

'I welcome you warmly, for Leonard's sake, at once, and doubtless shall soon do so for your own,' was the greeting of the hostess, as she came forward cordially to meet her guests; and at this Mrs Bell bridled and tossed her head, and replied in tones that were sharpened by some undefinable feeling of jealousy: 'If I had known that it was only for Mr Bell's sake that you asked me, I should have let him come alone.'

'The beauty of a Venus and the temper of a vixen and the breeding of a—what? What could have possessed Leonard to marry a woman who is so palpably not a lady?' Mrs Linton thought; but she spared her old friend and favourite the mortification of allowing the expression of these thoughts to portray themselves on her face.

'Twere long to tell and vain to hear' the series of humiliating incidents that occurred during this the first evening of Mrs Leonard Bell's introduction to her husband's set. Ignorant, vain, and ill-tempered, she outraged Mrs Linton's sense of social decorum at every turn; and when the moment of their departure arrived, Leonard felt, with a pang of genuine grief, that a change had been brought in his once staunch ally's opinion of him.

'She despises me,' he said to himself; 'but I owe it to the woman I have married, never to let Mrs Linton know how fully conscious I am of deserving her contempt. If any sacrifice is to be made, I will sacrifice her friendship and interest, rather than be disloyal to one of the obligations I have taken on myself.'

It was but the beginning of the end. The handsome artist soon found that his position in society altered in a way that made him wretched when he went into it. His wife was absolutely unteachable, and at times absolutely unbearable in her arrogance and ill-humour. The once courted, popular 'favourite of Fortune,' as he had been frequently designated, was keenly alive to the indifferent tones that had succeeded those which once thrilled with interest in him. He ran the gantlet of averted looks and cool accents, of languid answers, and every description of slight which Society offers to the man who has wronged it by 'marrying beneath him.' He ran the gantlet of these poisoned weapons for one season, and then lapsed from the sphere of which he had been the brightest luminary. There was something almost grand in the way in which he retired from the contest, that was so cruelly unequal. Even those who had been most merciless in awarding him the punishment due to his offence, acknowledged his manliness, and half admired him for it. He shewed the section of Society that had been his 'world,' that he would have no share in it while it ostracised his wife.

On the other hand, was she grateful for the sacrifice he made for her for his honour's sake? Was she even grateful for the air of thinking it no sacrifice at all, which he always assumed when she began to investigate the subject? Emphatically no! She was furious, spiteful that the necessity for his self-abnegating himself in such a way should have been thrust upon him; but she was careless and indifferent to the last degree about the graceful graciousness with

which he accepted the necessity. There was no balm for him in his wife's society and manner; there was no compensation to him for all he had lost in her cloudy looks and temper, in her ignorant derision of the art that was dear to him, or in her barely concealed aversion to, and jealousy of the few bachelor friends who still habitually associated with him.

A dreary life this of Leonard's, a desolate life, for he felt both mentally and socially isolated. For a time he strove to interest her in the literature of the day; he would give her extracts from contemporaneous history in the daily journals, and read chapter after chapter of moving pictures of real life from the pens of the best novelists. But he relinquished his self-appointed task in despair, when he found that she never either felt or feigned the faintest interest in any literature save pungent police reports, or in anything dramatic save melo-dramatic pieces at some of the transpontine theatres. As for conversing with him on any topic of the day, in which thousands of her fellow-creatures were taking a keen interest, if they had been topics of another world she could not have known less about them.

So two years passed away, and Leonard Bell's narrowed aspirations and interests, his social desolation and domestic lack of sympathy, began to tell on his work, in a way that it was very sad for those to see who had prophesied that the man who had started from such a praiseworthy point would eventually reach an exalted position. Now the few years had passed, and Mrs Linton and others of the class of which she is the representative, watched his decadence at the Academy with many a pang of self-reproach for having withheld the kindly word and the helping hand, that might have spared the feeling of abandonment which was making itself manifest.

'At least he can't have poverty to contend with,' the pretty fashionable woman, who had been such a friend of Leonard Bell's while the friendship redounded as much to her honour as to his, said to herself as she came out from the Academy one morning, after having vainly tried to discern something of his old better self in his best picture of the year. 'He can't have poverty to contend with. He is as popular as ever he was; and though he is popular with a lower class than formerly, it's with a class to whom money is no object. If I thought for a moment he was feeling the grip of want, I'd go and see him; as it is'—

As it was, Mrs Linton stifled the good impulse, and tried to banish all thoughts of the man whose career she had once proudly prognosticated would be a brilliant one.

But the day soon dawned when her resolution to forget the man for whom she had been ambitious, utterly broke down before a storm of strong human feeling. Glancing over the *Times* obituary one morning, her eye fell on the words: 'At Glenthorne House, St John's Wood, on the 9th instant, KATE, the only child of LEONARD and ELLEN BELL, aged four years.'

Her first feeling was one of intense, earnest, loving pity and sympathy for the bereft parents; her next a pang of pleasure that she herself, in spite of all her callous neglect of him, should have been so kindly remembered by Leonard, that he

had called his only child after her. 'At least they shall see that I don't stand aloof from them in their hour of trial,' she said to her husband half apologetically. But he rather checked her enthusiasm by reminding her that people 'acted injudiciously very often when attacked by a fit of late remorse.'

Who can tell what throbs of kindly feeling agitated her heart; what sweet desires to make amends filled her mind as she drove over to Glen-thorne House, resolving to go in with outstretched hands, and with the sorrow for them which she really felt, expressed in her face? Who can tell what an effort of self-constraint it cost her to go when she felt so little sure of a welcome, to meet those to whom she had played the social Pharisee's part?

For a few minutes she was left alone in a room that was well filled with handsome modern furniture stiffly and conventionally arranged. 'No evidences of poor Leonard's taste here,' she thought; then she blamed herself for the touch of contempt for the taste of his wife, which was tingling her reflections; and as he came in at the moment, went forward with tearful eyes and quivering lips to greet him.

'Your sorrow is reflected in my heart, my friend,' she murmured. 'Leonard, we have been strangers for a long time; let my sympathy with your wife and you now, win my way back to your friendship.'

She was chilled when he told her, told her quietly enough, that she had never lost his friendship, but that all friendship had seemed valueless to him since he had found it drawing lines and distinctions which would have made him seem a traitor in his own eyes if he had striven to retain it.

She was chilled, inexpressibly wounded, for she saw that the stab Society had given him rankled still. But her respect for him deepened as she realised that however foolish he had been in pledging the solemn vows he had pledged to Ellen Price, he had amply redeemed them to Ellen Bell.

'May I see your wife?' she next asked; and he told her 'yes,' and himself went and brought the once-brilliant beauty in.

Saddened, softened as she was by the loss of her child, the character of the wife for whose sake he was self-banished from the world he sympathised with and loved so well, remained unaltered. She was still jealous, suspicious, and anxious about minor matters, desperately ignorant, and arrogant in her manner. Still there was a touch of pathos in the words and tone in which she unconsciously revealed to Mrs Linton, when Leonard left them for a while, how unrepiningly and thoroughly her husband had stood the sharp test to which he had been subjected.

'I'm more sorry for Mr Bell than I am for myself even,' she said weeping; 'for though he never wants any company but mine, and is happier and more contented in his home, whatever temper I may be in, than I ever saw a man in my life, still our Kate was the apple of his eye; and she worshipped her father, and would have been a better companion for him perhaps than I am, if she had lived to grow up. He isn't like some men you see; his first thought has always been for his home, so the loss falls hard on him; for he's given

up everything that could take him away from it, for us; and now Kate's gone!'

'He's nobler by far now than he was when I predicted such a noble future for him,' Mrs Linton told her husband when she went home. 'Though married beneath him, he has never allowed his wife to see that she has cost him a jot of what was dear as life to him. Has he not been terribly tested, and triumphantly proved true?'

THE GLORY OF POSSESSION.

POPE says that 'Man never is, but always to be blessed'; a remark which, while obviously true as a rule, has yet many exceptions, which go far to prove its power and truth as a general axiom. Certain individuals are never satisfied with the condition of things around them, are always discontented and wishing for some change; all the time being blind to the fact that the root of the dissatisfaction lies within themselves. 'How well we should get on if we got such and such an appointment! How comfortable in such a position! How happy there, and how successful somewhere else,' is the continual cry. 'If I had this, or knew that, or might get such another thing, life would be far different!' Of such vain grumblers is Pope's line true, as forcibly true as it is of longings infinitely deeper.

But there is in the world another class, whose acceptance of things as they are is equally remarkable and almost equally aggravating. They are the people to whom the glory of possession covers all defects, and throws a beauty over all unsightliness; to whom all is wonderful, all is beautiful, because it is 'ours.' To such minds the very fact of possession implies perfection, not that the thing is so in itself, but that it becomes so extrinsically because it is 'our own.' These are the people who live in lonely wretchedness in country mansions, and wonder how others can exist in the smoke and din of a city; who tell you that they never have any fogs, never hear any storms; who speak of 'our' grapes and 'our' cabbages being finer than any other, and who pity the poor unfortunates who are so far the victims of fate as to be reduced to the necessity of eating market vegetables; totally oblivious of the important fact, that such individuals can have earlier peas and later strawberries, not to speak of the thousand dainties one garden cannot produce, but which the golden key can unlock as from the gardens of the Hesperides. Transport the same people to town, and (curious phenomenon) it is thenceforth a matter of wonder to them how people can live in a miserably dull country house; and town becomes the most desirable of residences simply because 'we' live in town. What of the fogs and the storms now and the many other disagreeables? All vanished away, or rather transferred to the now despised rural life.

In the same manner 'our' carriage is always the best. If it be a wagonette, it is so much more convenient than any other kind. Then when a

landau is purchased, how much more comfortable ; and it immediately becomes a matter of surprise that makers of any other style find any sale for their productions. The same state of feeling is evident towards the whole of the possessions, and ranges from the most important to the most trivial matter. The happy possessor of a small sailing-yacht discourses with apparent modesty of his 'trim-built wherry,' as he pleases to call it, affecting to prefer it to all boats of larger dimensions, and scoffing at the many drawbacks of steam and machinery. Next year, with the advent of a larger fortune, he becomes the owner of a fine screw-steamer, and all its good qualities are apparent and its bad ones forgotten, in the glory of possession.

In like manner with children ; the parents of each family are singularly alive to the defects in others, and quite cognisant of the rudeness of the children belonging to any one else, deploring with ludicrous gravity the fashionable errors of extravagant up-bringing and want of training ; while all the time they are perfectly blind to the faults of their own offspring, faults eminently visible to others, who are equally blinded towards their own. It is an old saying that 'Every crow thinks its own bird the whitest,' a proverb the truth of which is brought home to us every day in the present pitiable exaltation of children, and equally pitiable humiliation of parents, who cannot even enforce obedience, but who, seeing nothing amiss, look with admiring eyes on their ill-guided children, rampant in overbearing demeanour ; for over all defects is thrown the glamour of possession ; they are ideally beautiful in soul and body, for—they are 'ours.'

This remarkable state of mind tinges the opinions of such people in regard to all things both in nature and art. Wherever they have travelled, there and there alone are the true charms of nature. Speak not of rambles in unfrequented places or detours off the usual route, such details being sure to elicit the usual hackneyed stories of the time when 'we went up the Rhine' or 'our trip to Paris' (said trip being to a certainty 'our' only one). Hint at any sight they may have omitted to 'do,' and you are sure of the obvious reply : 'We did not go ; it was not worth seeing.' Of course not ! In Art it is the same way ; and it is fortunate that the immortality of genius does not depend on the fiat of such judgments, as whatever is new is wrong, and whatever is incomprehensible (to them) is wicked. They run down paintings they have never seen, and scoff at books they have never read, and have always on hand ready-made and sweeping judgments of things in general which they know nothing about, and therefore condemn. The only things that are right and beautiful and perfect are what they themselves do, what they themselves see, what they themselves possess. Such is the English philistine in his castle of Self, bound with the chains of bigotry and a slave to Mrs Grundy.

But the glory of possession does not gleam merely over the pleasures, luxuries, and so-called good things of life ; it also sheds an extraneous lustre upon the ills and sorrows of a section of mankind. We all know the unfortunate mortal whose

pain is the worst ever endured on earth ; and it is as difficult to screw sympathy for indigestion out of a toothache-sufferer as it is to make a hypochondriac believe himself as well as he really is. Each twinge of pain is literally hailed as an additional thorn in the crown of martyrdom ; and such sufferers revel in the narration of their various aches, dwelling on each detail with the complacent satisfaction which can only arise from the glory of possession. In sorrow, the same principle is often at work, and the *refrain* of man's grief is the bitter cry that 'there is no sorrow like unto *my* sorrow.' Each heart feels its own bitterness, and sorrows, like everything else, are great only by comparison. The loudness of the outward expression is in proportion to the shallowness of the feeling, and much talk is an evidence not of deep emotion, but of a certain glorying in the possession of a circumstance conferring momentary importance.

It is thus clear that certain individuals judge all things joyful as well as sorrowful from their own view-point, 'ego' being the touchstone of all ; and the narrower the nature, the harsher the judgment as far as others are concerned. The more closely one is wrapped up in his own concerns, the less does he care for the happiness of others ; and the more satisfied he is with his own affairs, the less easily is he pleased with those of another. Blind to his own faults, and cruel to those of the rest of the world ; unobservant of the many sins of omission and commission within his own magic circle (narrower or wider, as the case may be), and yet hypercritical of others, such a mind grows more and more contracted in proportion to the amount of glory derived from possession ; just as the pupil of a cat's eye diminishes as the light grows brighter.

Contentment is in truth a great virtue, and there is certainly no harm, but rather great good, in people being contented with their lot in life. It is likewise a wise dispensation of Providence that each should be pleased and satisfied with his belongings animate and inanimate ; and it is only when such satisfaction is fostered by that depreciation of others which engenders a spirit of Pharisaic self-righteousness that it becomes not merely despicable, but also wicked. The gratulation of one's self which can only be secured by finding fault with another, is the thin end of the wedge which soon leads to a constant habit of self-exaltation at the expense of others. That such a state of mind is common is a curious fact in a land which glories in the possession of a religion teaching one to 'love his neighbour as himself ;' but Selfishness would seem to dominate Christianity ; and the absence of the true spirit of that religion proves that, in too many cases, the devotion to the letter thereof is only one of the respectable, because sanctioned hypocries of the day.

To minds warped by self-satisfaction and glorying in the possession of the tangible and the materialistic, there can be no beauty in an ideal future where the world's judgments may be reversed, and the valuable here be the utterly valueless there. Such minds are not troubled by yearnings after the mysteries of the divine and eternal : the unseen has no power for them, the future no vague wonder, the soul no place. No shifting horizon of future blessedness ever gleams with tempting light before their eyes ; but thoroughly

comfortable in their own estate, surrounded by the good things of life, and lulled by a sense of entire satisfaction, the present is beautiful for them in the Glory of Possession.

AN INDIAN RACE-MEETING.

AN Indian officer kindly sends us the following notes from Sonopore on what is termed a race-meeting, the festivities at which extend over many days.

Originally a place of Hindu pilgrimage, Sonopore has come to be known as one of the great fairs of India, famous for its horses and elephants, its workings in wood gold and ivory, and specialties from Benares Delhi and Bombay; and still pious pilgrims flock to the temple of Mahadeo, on the banks of the Ganges, and bathe in the sacred waters when the moon of the month Katik is at its full. But it is neither with fair nor pilgrims that we have to do. Sonopore is a word of meaning to the residents of Patna and the surrounding districts. There, in a magnificent mango-wood, close to the race-course, and safely removed from the fair and its odorous crowds, they pitch their tents, invite their friends, and spend ten days or so in boundless hospitality and grateful relaxation. That mango *tope* has made the fortune of Sonopore.

A central road traverses the trees, and on each side, forming a sort of street, the 'camps' are placed. They are all much of the same pattern. In the centre you will see a large canopy, supported on poles, called a *Shamianah*; to this the Lady of the Camp has probably transported her drawing-room furniture, piano and all. A little behind will be a large closed tent; this serves as a dining-room. Round these two as a centre some twenty small tents are grouped; these are the private rooms of the visitors. Camps are usually formed by the leading civilians of the district, by the regiment stationed at Dinapore, and last, but not least, by the jovial indigo-planters of Tirhoot. At the extreme verge of the wood is situated the grand stand, in front of which the course sweeps round an ample plain. Inside the stand is a large ball-room with—oh, luxury!—a boarded floor, for it is a luxury to us in India, where we generally have to woo Terpsichore on dead spring-less *chunam*, with a dancing-cloth stretched over it.

And now, to tell you how the day is spent at Sonopore. Punctually at seven o'clock, bang! goes the camp-gun; and then, starting from the secretary's tent close to the Stand, a brass band perambulates the camp, waking up the lazy with that inspiring strain, *Hey, Johnnie Cope, are ye wauking yet?* No sleep after that! Up you get and make for the races. These last for about two hours; but as I cannot profess any admiration for the Indian Turf, I will pass them over. With appetites sharpened by the cold air of a November morning, we hurry back to breakfast—always a jolly jovial meal at Sonopore; the men in good-humour, and the ladies with real English roses on their cheeks. After breakfast, you can sit out under the trees, and interview the various travelling merchants with their wondrous silk-work from Cashmere and their stocks of Delhi jewellery. Possibly a travelling juggler may drop in. Every one has heard of Indian jugglers; but to appreciate them, you should see them sitting on the grass with no

table, and no apparatus but a cloth spread in front of them, performing the same tricks that gave fame to Anderson and Stodare. This sort of thing, with perhaps a little visiting, passes the time till luncheon, after which you can go and see the fair from the back of an elephant. The sagacious beasts take you very comfortably through the crowds, though every now and then they draw down on you the wrath of some obese provision-seller by helping themselves *en passant* from his stall. Afterwards, you can ride or drive on the course, or if skilled therein, join as good a game of Polo as any to be found in India. One year they got up tilting at the ring for ladies; but as each ring was a silver bangle, and as the fair performers were so stimulated thereby, they had at last to stop it, lest the race-fund should be ruined. After a short breathing-time comes dinner, and after dinner, every other evening we have a dance.

A dance at Sonopore is much like a dance elsewhere I suppose, so we may pass these evenings by. But on the alternate ones, when the regimental band and a roaring bonfire call us all to the camp of H. M.—th, you will see something that is probably new to you. A cheerful fire crackling and flaming up till it nearly reaches the lower branches of the trees; round about, a semi-circle of ladies in their evening dresses, with a background of men in black or scarlet, white tents shewing here and there through the trees, with the Sonopore moon shining down over all, form a picture that gives one a very favourable idea of Indian life. Between the tunes, you will perhaps hear a song or two of more or less merit, and the muffled claret goes round merrily. Presently the ladies flit off like ghosts through the moonlight, and round the now dying embers, the details of many a pig-sticking hunt are recapitulated, and many a long-bow is pulled with a skill only to be arrived at by a lengthened apprenticeship in the gorgeous East. And so the day ends; and so life goes on for nearly a fortnight more or less, and the Sonopore race-meet comes to an end.

A LITERARY CURIOSITY.

From the Annual Report of the British Museum, which has just been made public by order of the House of Commons, we learn that in the department of Printed Books the most important acquisition of the past year has been the purchase of a copy of the great Chinese Encyclopædia, the native title of which may be rendered, 'A Complete Collection of Writings and Illustrations, Ancient and Modern, drawn up under Imperial Sanction.' The acquisition of this literary curiosity is due mainly to the exertions of the late Mr W. S. F. Mayers, Chinese Secretary of Her Majesty's Legation at Peking, who after nearly a year's negotiation succeeded in making the purchase for the British Museum.

This great Encyclopædia—we spare our readers the Chinese title—is comprised in no fewer than five thousand and twenty volumes, and consists of a vast thesaurus, into which is digested the entire mass of Chinese literature extant at the date of its publication, classified under appropriate headings, and accompanied by illustrative drawings, plans, and maps. It includes treatises ranging from about 1150 B.C. to about 1700 A.D.; and

it is said that with the exception of novels, upon which the true Chinese scholar looks with contempt, every branch of the national literature is fully represented in it.

This stupendous work was compiled in the early part of the eighteenth century by an Imperial Commission of high officials, appointed by the famous Emperor Kang-hsi, who ruled China from 1662 to 1722. This great emperor, so well known from the accounts of the Jesuit missionaries, whom he favoured and assisted, and who were his instructors in European arts and learning, was himself a great writer, and he was struck by the alterations and corruptions which were gradually being introduced into the texts of standard works. He therefore conceived the idea of re-printing from the most authentic editions the whole body of Chinese literature then in existence. The Commission of high officials above mentioned was accordingly directed to select and classify the texts; and their labours extended over forty years, terminating in the publication of the work in the early years of the reign of Kang-hsi's successor, Yung-cheng, who consequently inscribed the preface in his stead.

In the compilation of this great storehouse of information the editors adopted the principle of grouping the materials before them into six grand categories, containing all matters relating to the Heavens, the Earth, Mankind, Inanimate Nature, Philosophy, and Political Economy. These categories were subdivided into thirty-two sections, the components of which were more minutely classified under upwards of six thousand heads. To shew the great care exercised by the compilers in carrying out the very onerous task imposed upon them, we venture to enumerate the subject-matters of the thirty-two sections—namely the heavenly bodies, the calendar, astronomy and mathematical science, astrology, the earth, the dominions of China, the topography of the same, the frontier nations and foreign countries, the imperial court, the imperial buildings, official institutes, domestic laws, private relationships, genealogy and biography, men, women, arts and divinations, religion and phenomena, the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom, canonical and general literature, education and conduct, *belles lettres*, etymology, the official examination system, the system of official appointments, food and commerce, ceremonies, music, military organisation, administration of justice, and handicraft.

The general index to this vast and comprehensive collection fills twenty volumes, in addition to the minute indices attached to each subdivision; so that a large amount of work will have to be done in cataloguing it to make it available to a European investigator.

Having thus described the scope of this unique literary curiosity, it only remains to say a few words as to the more mechanical part of the work. For the purpose of printing the Encyclopædia, a complete fount of copper type was specially cast under the direction of the Jesuit missionaries, who probably also superintended the printing, as the Chinese have not at any time used movable type to any great extent. Only one hundred copies, it is said, were printed; and this number has no doubt been much reduced by various casualties during the last century and a half. The whole impression was distributed as

gifts amongst the princes of the imperial family and other great officers of state. The type used in the production of the work is said to have been melted shortly afterwards, and converted into money, to meet the exigencies of the government during a financial crisis, so that a second edition could not be struck off. The copies still extant are in the hands of the families of the original recipients, from one of which the copy just acquired by the British Museum has been purchased; and as no copy is known to be accessible for reference in China itself, the Chinese will in future have greater facilities in London for literary research than they can hope to obtain in their own country!

THE USE OF OIL AT SEA.

ALTHOUGH the effects of pouring oil upon the troubled waters scarcely enters into the mind of man beyond a figurative sentiment, there are a few modern instances of its wonderful power at sea in cases of impending shipwreck. Those few cases, however, which have found a faithful record, ought to arrest more deeply the public attention; for if the efficacy of oil is of the nature which these accounts would lead us to accept, so simple a provision against the disasters of the ocean cannot be too extensively known. With this view we return to a subject which has already been touched upon in these columns, and would lay before our readers certain facts which will bear examination, and it is hoped tend to further inquiry.

As far back as 1770, a Dutch East Indiaman was saved from wreck in a storm near the islands of Paul and Amsterdam, by pouring on the sea a jar of olive-oil. The writer of *Wellerdehre* states that a Mr Ritchie, who accompanied a Danish captain to the island of Porto Santo (being tutor to his son), was standing on the shore during a hurricane, when he saw the vessel in which he arrived torn from her anchor and swallowed up. Suddenly in the middle of the bay appeared a boat driving towards the shore. The waves, however, advanced with redoubled energy, but without breaking, and tossed the boat so high on the strand that the men were able to jump out and scramble up the beach. The rescue was due to the captain, who as the boat entered the breakers, stove in the head of a keg of oil, which though unable to lessen their height, prevented the waves from breaking, and caused them to run up the strand like rollers, carrying the boat with them.

In 1867, a master stated in the *New York Shipping List* that he had been at sea twenty-eight years and master for ten years, and that he had saved the vessel under his command twice by oiling the sea. He says when a ship is disabled and cannot get out of a storm, and the master has to make the best of a gale, if he has oil on board he should start two or three gallons over the side, *to windward*; this will make smooth water. The oil allowed to drip slowly out is all that is required; the ship is in smooth though heaving water as long as the oil runs. In 1864, in the heaviest gale of wind he ever experienced, he lost all sails, and then the

rudder followed; and he knew the vessel could not have ridden the sea for an hour longer if he had not had some oil. Five gallons lasted fifty-six hours, and thus saved the vessel, cargo, and lives. He recommends that ships of heavy tonnage should have two iron tanks of forty gallons each, one on each side, with the faucets so arranged that the oil can be started at any time into small vessels—say ten-gallon casks; and in all ships' boats, tanks of five gallons each well filled, so that in case the ship founders or burns, the boats will have oil to smooth the sea in a gale. With these tanks, and a good master who knows the law of storms and handles the ship so as to get out of the centre of it, the danger of foundering is greatly reduced.

Captain Betts of the *King Cenric*, of one thousand four hundred and ninety tons, which lately arrived at Bombay from Liverpool with a cargo of coal, used common pine-oil in a heavy gale of wind to prevent the sea breaking on board, and with perfect success. The gale continued for nearly five days, and raged with determined fury. It had lasted some time, when the chief officer, Mr Bowyer, bethought himself of a plan he had seen tried upon some occasions when in the Atlantic trade to prevent the sea breaking in. He got out two canvas clothes-bags; into each he poured two gallons of oil. He punctured the bags slightly, and hung one over each quarter, towing them along. The effect was magical. The waves no longer broke against the poop and sides of the ship; but yards and yards away, where the oil had slowly spread itself over the water and in the wake of the vessel, was a large space of calm water. The crew were thus able to repair damages with greater ease; the ship was relieved from those tremendous shocks received from the mass of waters which had burst over her quarters and stern, and the danger was considerably lessened. The two bags lasted two days; after which, the worst rage of the storm having expended itself, no more oil was used. Four gallons of oil, scarcely worth thirty shillings, perhaps here saved *King Cenric*, its cargo, and the lives and property of the crew.

The above facts are capable of absolute verification. The philosophy of the operation is simply, that the thin covering of oil floating on the waves prevents the wind from entering under the surface, and therefore greatly reduces the roughness of the sea, and probably the height of the waves, the crests of which are thus prevented from breaking, which is one of the principal causes of danger. There is, however, nothing new in the application of oil for such purposes. Pliny mentions that in his day divers used to throw oil to lessen the roughness of the sea, in order that they might more readily discern objects at the bottom.

The position of seals is readily known by the traces of oil which they throw up when feeding on oil-giving fishes such as the cod; and the course taken by shoals of herrings and pilchards can also be easily observed by the oil, let free, causing streaks of smooth water in the midst of the otherwise turbulent element. From the same reason, the sea never breaks round the body of a dead or harpooned whale, and its track for a long distance may be clearly discerned. The cook's slush, or the waste from a disused oil-barrel, or a little coal-tar thrown overboard, has caused a rough sea to become remarkably smooth. Dr Franklin tells us

that in Newport Harbour, U. S., the sea was always smooth when there were any whaling-vessels at anchor in it, through the waste of blubber and oil from them. When the bilge-water from oil-laden ships in the Ceylon trade is pumped overboard, the roughness caused by a gale subsides immediately; and knowing this, some intelligent masters, especially when near the Cape of Good Hope, always resort to the pumps of such ships previous to encountering heavy weather. Indeed, when running a gale, oil is sometimes thrown from vessels in the Newfoundland and Labrador trade, to keep the sea from breaking over them. They can run much longer with this assistance than without it, and the oil spreads to windward as fast as to leeward. Yet how little are these facts known. The writer has spoken of them for years to captains of vessels, who have either received these facts with indifference or refused them credence. It is to be hoped that more general attention may be given to this important subject; and as it is one which deeply concerns the interests of the mercantile marine, it seems most desirable that some public body—the Wreck Commissioners, for instance—should get together all the substantial information which might lead to placing the matter in an effective shape. What could be more applicable for initial experiments than a trial of life-boats, &c. going out in rough weather to stranded or wrecked vessels? We throw out the hint.

SWIMMING FOR GIRLS.

The public are continually reminded of the numerous contrivances, supports, stays, shoulder-straps, &c., and the various exercises that are best calculated to prevent round shoulders, a stooping awkward gait, contracted chests, and so forth; but perhaps there is no kind of exercise for girls more calculated to attain those desirable objects than that of swimming. During the act of swimming the head is thrown back, the chest well forward, while the thoracic and respiratory muscles are in strong action, and both the upper and lower extremities are brought into full play. Indeed, in a health-point of view, females would often have an advantage over the stronger sex, as, owing to the large amount of adipose tissue covering their muscles, and the comparative smallness and lightness of their bones, they not only have greater powers of flotation than men, but as a rule, can continue much longer in the water. They are therefore naturally qualified to become good swimmers; and Mr Macgregor mentions that out of a class of thirty girls, whose instruction commenced late last season, twenty-five were taught to swim in six lessons, and six of them won prizes. It is to be hoped therefore, that girls will not be debarred from learning this graceful and healthful accomplishment either through lack of baths or of teachers. Such a practice is particularly called for at the present day, as a set-off against the growing tendency in the 'girls of the period' to indulge in those literary and sedentary pursuits which are anything but favourable to the development of a healthy physique.—*Medical Press and Circular*.

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